

APR - 5 1994

Mr. John Lewis
221 East 12th Street No. 2
New York, NY 10003

Dear Mr. Lewis:

This is in regard to your letter of January 12, 1994, directed to American Airlines with a copy to the Department of Transportation. The copy was forwarded for our response since the Transport Airplane Directorate is responsible for developing any new safety standards for airline airplanes.


In your letter, you express concern that video monitors installed over the passenger aisles in Boeing 727 airplanes would interfere with the safe egress of passengers in an emergency.

Please be assured that we share your concern about equipment which might impede evacuation. In assessing the acceptability of interior features and equipment installed in airline airplanes, the FAA typically uses a range of occupant sizes from the 5th percentile female to the 95th percentile male. We have, therefore, established a minimum height above the floor of 73 inches for items that hang from the ceiling. This corresponds approximately to the height of a 95th percentile male. In addition to video monitors, such items include class dividers, curtain headers and exit signs. Numerous tests to demonstrate the evacuation capabilities of airline airplanes have been conducted with such items installed at this height. No adverse results attributable to these items have been noted during the demonstrations. The video monitors must also be free of sharp edges or corners and are usually padded on the lower portion of the screen.

We recognize that the video monitors may pose some inconvenience for persons outside the specified size range; however, they are not an obstacle for the vast majority of people. In any event, the criteria described above do ensure that the video monitors are safely installed.

I trust that the above has addressed your concerns.

Sincerely,


for Ronald T. Wojnar
Manager, Transport Airplane Directorate
Aircraft Certification Service